

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 01753 082033 Z

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4617

INFO CINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1753

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UY

SUBJECT: POLITICAL TENSIONS CONTINUE

CINCSO FOR POLAD

1. IN WHAT IS BECOMING THE NORMAL STATE OF POLITICAL LIFE
HERE, URUGUAY EXPERIENCED ANOTHER WEEK OF TENSION AND CON-
FRONTATION. EXAMPLES IN ADDITION TO LABOR UNREST REPORTED
MONTEVIDEO 1744, INCLUDE: A) CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES COMMISSION
REVIEWING IMPEACHMENT CHARGES AGAINST SENATOR ENRIQUE ERRO
VOTED JUNE 7 TO RECOMMEND AGAINST IMPEACHMENT OF THE CONTRO-
VERSIAL "FRENTE AMPLIO" SENATOR. FILL HOUSE WILL CONSIDER
COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS EARLY NEXT WEEK. WHILE POSSIBILITY
REMAINS FOR SIMPLE MAJORITY IN CHAMBER FAVORING IMPEACHMENT,
VOTE IN COMMISSION IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT IT WILL BE
IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN TWO- THIRDS VOTE IN THE SENATE NECESSARY
FOR THE CONVICTION OF ERRO. B) MILITARY COURT ON JUNE 6 IN-
DICTED BLANCO PARTY DIRECTORATE PRESIDENT (AND RETIRED NAVY
CAPTAIN) HOMAR MURDOCH FOR BEING " DISRESPECTFUL" TOWARDS
ARMED FORCES. CHARGES STEM FROM MURDOCH HAVING SIGNED MARCH
27 BLANCO DIRECTORATE DECLARATION WHICH ATTACKED EXECUTIVE'S
AND ARMED FORCES' ENROACHMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF
OTHER INSTITUTIONS (MONTEVIDEO 941). MILITARY JUDGE, HOW-
EVER, MODERATED ACTION AGAINST MURDOCH BY UNPRECEDENTED DE-
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PAGE 02 MONTEV 01753 082033 Z

CISION NOT TO JAIL HIM WHILE AWAITING PROCESSING OF HIS INDICTMENT. BLANCO DIRECTORATE HAS NEVERTHELESS SCHEDULED PUBLIC RALLY JUNE 15 TO PROTEST MILITARY JUDGE'S DECISION.

C) SENATE ISSUED TWO SEPARATE SUMMONS DEMANDING INTERPELLATION OF MINDEFENSE WALTER RAVENNA. SUMMONS COVERED ACCUSATION OF TORTURE BY ARMED FORCES UNIT IN INTERIOR AND QUESTION OF WHETHER ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY OFFICERS APPOINTED TO STATE AUTONOMOUS AGENCIES WILL BE UNDER AUTHORITY OF CIVILIAN OR MILITARY SUPERIORS. RAVENNA TO DATE HAS REFUSED TO RESPOND TO SENATE SUMMONS, DESPITE CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT THAT HE APPEAR.

D) MILITARY COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, IN WRITTEN REQUEST JUNE 5 TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE, ASKED THAT MILITARY JUSTICE INVESTIGATE NEW CHARGES BY SENATOR AMILCAR VASCONCELLOS THAT "A GROUP OF AMBITIOUS MILITARY COMMANDERS, IGNORING THE CONSTITUTION AND THE NATION'S LAWS, HAVE COMMITTED AND ARE COMMITTING CRIMES". CINC'S DEMAND BELIEVED TO BE IN ANTICIPATION OF REQUEST TO LIFT CONGRESSIONAL IMMUNITIES OF SENATORS FOR "DEFAMATION OF ARMED FORCES". IN PARALLEL ACTION, MILITARY REPORTEDLY HAS SOUGHT TO REACTIVATE MILITARY CHARGES MADE LATE LAST YEAR AGAINST COLORADO LEADER, JORGE BATLLE, FOR MALIGNING THE ARMED FORCES. BATLLE'S LAWYERS HAVE REACTED BY REQUESTING THAT CHARGES AGAINST BATLLE BE TRANSFERRED FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN JURISDICTION.

3. COMMENT: CONFRONTATION ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN POLITICIANS AND MILITARY HAS NOW BECOME SO MUCH A PART OF DAY-TO-DAY URUGUAYAN POLITICS THAT AT LEAST SOME POLITICIANS ARE PREDICTING TO US THAT PRESENT INSTABILITY MAY GO ON INDEFINITELY. ONE INDICATION THAT EXECUTIVE/MILITARY MAY BE GETTING ITS WAY DESPITE CONGRESSIONAL ANTAGONISMS HAS BEEN FAILURE OF OPPOSITION CONGRESSMEN TO OBTAIN QUORUM IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS WEEK TO OVERRIDE MAY 31 EXECUTIVE DECREES BY PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, WHICH EXTENDED SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL GUARANTEES (MONTEVIDEO 1667). CONSENSUS, HOWEVER, IS THAT ANY OF ABOVE POINTS OF CONFLICT COULD ERUPT INTO NEW CHALLENGES TO NATION'S CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY CONGRESS. KEY PRO-ADMINISTRATION COLORADO SENATOR TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 7 THAT EXPECTATIONS OF HIS GROUP ARE FOR SOME UNCONSTITUTIONAL MOVE BY EXECUTIVE/MILITARY IN COMING WEEKS (MOST LIKELY PROSPECT STILL BEING THE ILLEGAL ARREST OF SENATOR ERRO), WITH RESULTING EFFORT BY CONGRESS TO IMPEACH PRESIDENT BORDABERRY.

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PAGE 03 MONTEV 01753 082033 Z

SOURCE NOTED THAT FOCUS OF HIS GROUP'S EFFORT IN CONGRESS NOW IS TO ASSURE THAT PRESIDENT WILL HAVE MINIMUM NUMBER OF ELEVEN SENATE VOTES TO BLOCK ANY IMPEACHMENT EFFORT. HE ALSO NOTED THAT LEADERS OF HIS FACTION ARE ALSO ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE MILITARY LEADERS NOT TO ACT PRECIPITATELY IF IMPEACHMENT MOVE OCCURS.

STEINS

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